

these questions. The EPA has said it needs time to further review the science, and the EPA has said it will take that time if we give it to them to do a good rule that will protect the country and yet not do damage to small communities in rural areas.

It is also important to note that this amendment does not stop the EPA from acting at any time the EPA deems it is ready to act. If the EPA says it has the process finalized, it has the science understood and is ready to proceed, they can proceed tomorrow, they can proceed in November or December or January when the statutory deadline exists. Again, the EPA has told us they are not ready to do so and that they need this extra time. We believe they need the extra time because of the impending damage that could be caused to local communities across this country.

As Senator BOND has said, there are communities and individual families who will see their water bills go up by hundreds of dollars. There are communities that probably will have to go off their systems because of this. The potential damage if we do not give the EPA the time to act properly and to review the comments is immense, and that is why I must oppose this amendment. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I reserve the time that has been allocated to various Members. I now allocate 3 minutes to the distinguished senior Senator from Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Idaho is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 4205

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, on behalf of the leadership, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the DOD authorization conference report following the consideration and vote on H.R. 4516 on Thursday; that the conference report be considered as having been read and debated under the following agreement: 2 hours under the control of the chairman of the Armed Services Committee; 2½ hours under the control of Senator LEVIN; 1 hour under the control of Senator GRAMM; 30 minutes under the control of Senator WELLSTONE; that following the debate just outlined, Senator BOB KERREY be recognized to make a point of order, and that the motion to waive the Budget Act be limited to 2 hours equally divided in the usual form. I further ask unanimous consent that following the use or yielding back of time on the motion to waive, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion and, if waived, a vote occur immediately on adoption of the conference report, without any intervening action, motion, or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is the agreement we have been attempting to work out for the last day. This is something Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN have worked on very hard. It is a good bill. We, on this side, think the agreement is something that will be to the benefit not only of the Senate but the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Idaho.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS—Continued

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of my subcommittee for yielding.

I say to the Senator from California, her amendment is a perfect example of no good deed goes unpunished. I say that to the Senator from California for this very simple reason. This language has been worked out with all of the parties, and all of the staffs, with the administration, and with the EPA. While they do not like it, they understand their science, and where they are does not justify, at this time, the kind of regulation they are attempting to bring down.

From the State of the Senator from California, let me read from the Indian Wells Valley Water District. This is a water district of 10 to 12 wells, wells that, meeting the current standard proposed by EPA, would cost this water district \$1 million per year—a 60- to 70-percent cost increase in their operations.

What happens when Government goes silly or crazy based on science they have not substantiated, in highly mineralized areas, where arsenic is present in water supplies, is that they drive up costs, and ultimately they collapse these little water districts and everybody goes out and drills their own wells to supply their own household water and then an even greater problem exists.

We are talking about cost per speculative cancer case—cost per speculative cancer case.

If the amendment of the Senator from California prevails, that cost per speculative cancer case goes to \$5 million per speculative case.

I do not think that is good policy. I know the science isn't there yet to justify it because the word "speculative" is the word EPA uses in suggesting these dramatic reductions in arsenic levels.

I do not want to destroy rural water systems. Neither does this subcommittee. My colleague from Idaho spoke very clearly about the real live impact if this amendment were to prevail. Across this country, small independent water districts cannot nor

could not comply without a cost of several hundred dollars more per month added to the cost of a water bill.

This is not good policy. I do not even think it is good politics.

Let me repeat: No good deed will go unpunished according to this amendment because we have been working collectively together to solve this problem, recognizing the phenomenal importance of the water quality to all citizens in this country.

Energy and Water, as an authorizing committee, has acted responsibly. While the ranking member might suggest that staff or they were not consulted, that is simply not true. They were thoroughly involved and consulted on this issue. This is a compromise. It does not shut down the process, as has clearly been spoken to by my colleague from Idaho, Senator CRAPO. So I hope the Senate will recognize that.

Let us not rush to judgment, nor let us not get into the speculative business of driving up costs of water and, therefore, allowing people to go out and drill their own wells and even create a more dangerous water structure for small rural communities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 3 minutes have expired.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of debate on the two amendments under the previous order, I be permitted to speak on the VA-HUD bill for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, we reserve the remainder of our time on these amendments. I believe the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee is on his way over.

What time do we have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri has 2 minutes, and the Senator from California has 3 minutes.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Chair. We reserve our time.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to respond to my colleagues directly on a number of points that they made. These two riders should be deleted. It is bad process. I think that has been spoken to a number of times. And it is really bad policy. I think that has been spoken to as well.

I say to my dearest friend, Senator MIKULSKI, who has worked so hard on